EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION

FILM AND VIDEO
School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design
Department of Cinema and Media Arts

FA / FILM 4124 6.0 SECTION A
WRITING FOR TELEVISION II
FALL 2018 / WINTER 2019

Last Modified Date: 10/22/2018

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Provides an advanced focus on the craft of writing dramatic scripts (teleplays) for television and related media, and hands-on experience with working in a story department, culminating in each student's creation of an original one-hour prime time television series. Prerequisite: FA/FILM 3124 3.0.

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INSTRUCTOR(S)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Section / Format / Term</th>
<th>Contact Email</th>
<th>Contact Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schechter, Rebecca</td>
<td>Sec. A / STDO / Y</td>
<td><a href="mailto:srebecca@yorku.ca">srebecca@yorku.ca</a></td>
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</tbody>
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SPECIAL FEATURES

Writing for Television II is an advanced course for screenwriting students interested in a career in series television and pursuing excellence in their writing. The television landscape is the midst of a huge upheaval. There is more dramatic content available on TV than ever before, now that streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime and Hulu are commissioning original series. Television is also in the midst of a "golden age," in which the quality of limited and long-running series is unparalleled in TV history, drawing screenwriters from film, theatre and prose fiction. It’s an exciting and challenging time for new writers. However, television remains a market-driven medium, far more so than film, such that writing for it demands more flexibility, collaboration, accommodation of external influence, understanding of audience, and increasingly, an extension of the story onto digital platforms.

This course will give students some of the tools needed for a career as a television writer along with a sense of the current television marketplace in Canada and abroad. Currently, writing for television is the best way to make a living as a screenwriter in Canada. It is, however, an extremely competitive and demanding career. This course will examine the art, craft and business of television writing. Students will learn about the industry, how story rooms function, the role of the showrunner and the process of developing television series from concept to final draft. The course will also examine how writers can protect their egos and craft through the challenges of this kind of work.

Through in-class screenings, discussions, and writing, the students will tangle with the unique forces that shape the television landscape. They will analyze existing series with the aim of learning to recognize and create the elements inherent in successful shows. They will participate in series development, creating pitch documents and a bible. Students will write scripts and story edit the work of others. They will develop skills in collaborative storytelling that are used in television story departments.
Through the first term, classes will focus on development of original dramatic television series. Students will work on every phase of series development, spending time generating series concepts, building characters, developing themes, pitching story lines and exploring the other elements on which a series rests. These elements will be combined into a series bible that will form the major assignment for the first term.

In the second term, the focus will shift to story and scripts. Each student will develop a pilot script for the series they created in the first term. Students will pitch story lines, work together to break story, write beat sheets and outlines, provide notes to one another and finally, write a first draft script. The script will be the final assignment for the course.

This is a serious writer’s course. Students are expected to have excellent writing and language skills. Attendance and active participation in all in-class exercises and discussions are essential elements of the course.

**GRADED ASSESSMENT**

**Course Readings**

Students will be expected to watch assigned television episodes and read scripts for these episodes where they are available. They will also be required to attend one or more industry events to hear working writers talk about their work.

**Evaluation** *

Like the television industry, this course is grounded in the principles of active involvement, interaction, collaboration, and discussion. Attendance is crucial. Engagement is crucial. Input is crucial. Come to class prepared to talk.

The instructor expects all submitted work to be typed, identifiable, properly formatted and conscientiously proofread.

Students are expected to deliver scripts in proper screenplay format.

*The Senate Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy stipulates that (a) the grading scheme (i.e. kinds and weights of assignments, essays, exams, etc.) be announced, and be available in writing, within the first two weeks of class, and that, (b) under normal circumstances, graded feedback worth at least 15% of the final grade for Fall, Winter or Summer Term, and 30% for ‘full year’ courses offered in the Fall/Winter Term be received by students in all courses prior to the final withdrawal date from a course without receiving a grade. See the policy for exceptions to this aspect of the policy at http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=86.

**Term Y**

| Last date to drop courses without receiving a grade | Feb. 8 |

**Assignment Due Dates and Grading Breakdown**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 17</td>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>1-page series premise (setting)</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>Oct. 1 assignment 3 1-page series premise (character)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
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<td>1-page series premise (theme)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 15</td>
<td>Assignment 4</td>
<td>1-page series premise for the series you’ll create for the course.</td>
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<td>Dec 3</td>
<td>Assignment 5</td>
<td>SERIES BIBLE, Draft 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 21</td>
<td>Assignment 6</td>
<td>Beat sheets for pilot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>Assignment 7</td>
<td>Outlines for pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 11</td>
<td>Assignment 8</td>
<td>1-page series premise for the series you’ll create for the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Assignment 9</td>
<td>SERIES BIBLE, Draft 2 FIRST DRAFT SCRIPT</td>
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Grading, Assignment Submission, Lateness Penalties and Missed Tests

Grading: The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests* will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.) For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar at http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/2015-2016/academic/grades/.

Assignment Submission:
Assignments will be submitted on time and on paper – unless otherwise specified by the Course Director. Email submissions will only be accepted when specifically noted. Assignments will be professionally presented with a title page or clear identification of the student’s name, the assignment # and the group/series the student is working in. All your work should be proofread and in the appropriate format. Scripts should be formatted with professional script software.

Lateness Penalty:
Late assignments will not be accepted, other than under extraordinary circumstances and by arrangement with the course director on or before the due date. Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized (one half letter grade per day that the assignment is late), with a grade of F after one week. Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness or compassionate grounds will require supporting documentation (e.g. a doctor’s letter). The course is structured so that each stage of the work feeds into the following assignments. If you fall behind on assignments it will compromise your ability to

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS
All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:

- Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures
- Academic Integrity Website
  http://www.yorku.ca/ academicintegrity.
- Accessibility/Disability Services: course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities, including physical, medical, learning and psychiatric disabilities
  yorku.ca/cds.
- Accommodating Students with Disabilities (York Senate Policy)
- Ethics Review Process for research involving human participants
- Religious Observance Accommodation
  https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm.woa/wa/regobs
- Student Conduct

IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS
Please note that this information is subject to periodic update.

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:

**Academic Honesty and Integrity**

York students are required to maintain high standards of academic integrity and are subject to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty at http://www.yorku.ca/univsec/policies/document.php?document=69.

There is also an academic integrity website with complete information about academic honesty. Students are expected to review the materials on the Academic Integrity website at http://www.yorku.ca/ academicintegrity.

**Accessibility/Disability Services**

York provides services for students with disabilities (including learning, mental health, physical, sensory and medical disabilities) needing accommodation related to teaching and evaluation methods/materials. These services are made available to students in all Faculties and programs at York University.

Students in need of these services are asked to register with disability services in **Counselling & Disability Services** as early as possible to ensure sufficient advance notice so that appropriate academic accommodation can be provided. You are encouraged to schedule a time early in the term to meet with each professor to discuss your accommodation needs. Please note that registering with disabilities services and discussing your needs with your professors is necessary to avoid any impediment to receiving the necessary academic accommodations to meet your needs.

Additional information is available at www.yorku.ca/cds or by contacting the offices of the disability service providers:


Ethics Review Process
York students are subject to the York University Policy for the Ethics Review Process for Research Involving Human Participants at http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=94. In particular, students proposing to undertake research involving human participants (e.g., interviewing the director of a company or government agency, having students complete a questionnaire, etc.) are required to submit an Application for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants at least one month before you plan to begin the research. If you are in doubt as to whether this requirement applies to you, contact your Course Director immediately.

Religious Observance Accommodation
York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making accommodations for observances of special significance to adherents. Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for an in-class test or examination pose such a conflict for you, contact the Course Director within the first three weeks of class. Similarly, should an assignment to be completed in a lab, practicum placement, workshop, etc., scheduled later in the term pose such a conflict, contact the Course Director immediately. Please note that to arrange an alternative date or time for an examination scheduled in the formal examination periods (December and April/May), students must complete an Examination Accommodation Form, which can be obtained from Student Client Services, Student Services Centre or online at http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/exam_accommodation.pdf. Further information on religious observance is available at https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm.woa/wa/regobs.

Student Conduct
Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy and mutual respect and to refrain from actions disruptive to such a relationship. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the instructor to maintain an appropriate academic atmosphere in the classroom, and the responsibility of the student to cooperate in that endeavour. Further, the instructor is the best person to decide, in the first instance, whether such an atmosphere is present in the class. A statement of the policy and procedures involving disruptive and/or harassing behaviour by students in academic situations is available on the York website http://www.yorku.ca/univsec/policies/document.php?document=82.

Many courses utilize Moodle, York University’s course website system. If your course is using Moodle, click here to access it.
Moodle @ York University